

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed June 14, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e); rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a); and objected to claims 17-26 as dependent from rejected base claims. Claims 14-26 remain pending and under consideration.

Interview Request

If the Examiner determines that this reply does not put the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone before the Examiner issues another Office Action, to arrange an Examiner Interview for the purpose of discussing further amendment to place the rejected claims in condition for allowance.

Response to § 102 Rejections

Claims 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,272,128 ("Pierson"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 14 has been amended to recite "requesting the address of a respective hub by the switching system via a request message addressed to one of the communication terminals connected to the respective hub." As explained on page 5 of the present application's specification, in prior art systems the only way a user of a terminal connected to a network could determine the hubs associated with the terminal was to trace back the path through the network. This required acquiring the switching information stored in each hub. The method recited in claim 14 improves upon prior art systems by associating an unambiguous address with each hub in the network. Having such an address allows a user to determine the identity of a hub by sending a request message addressed to a communication terminal.

Pierson does not disclose anything comparable with associating unambiguous addresses with a hub in a network. As such, Pierson also doesn't disclose requesting the address of a hub via a request message addressed to a communication terminal. Instead, Pierson teaches a standard ATM system carrying ATM cells where each cell stores VPI and VCI fields used to identify the cell's destination (see column 9, lines 2-5). These VPI and VCI information are not comparable to the unambiguous address of claim 14.

Claim 15 depends upon claim 14. As such, claim 15 is patentable over Pierson for at least the same reasons claim 14 is patentable over Pierson.

Response to § 103 Rejections

The Examiner rejected claim 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Pierson. This rejection is respectfully traversed. The prior art discloses nothing that suggests modifying Pierson to overcome the deficiencies discussed above. Since claim 16 depends from claim 14, claim 16 is patentable over Pierson for the same reasons as claim 14.

Response to Objections

The Examiner objected claims 17-26 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Applicants respectfully traverse this objection on the ground that the base claim is allowable.

Conclusion

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 9/14/05

By: Richard A. Gollhofer

Richard A. Gollhofer
Registration No. 31,106

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500